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They are the gifts that keep on taking.

We refer this week before Christmas week to proposed and/or pending federal and/or state legislation and/or rules designed to further handicap the natural gas industry nationwide and in Pennsylvania.

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And it's just the latest page in a long-running playbook that dictates if something does not fit your political agenda or social re-engineering schemes, you work assiduously to find a way to tax or regulate it out of existence.

The U.S. House of Representatives is considering what the Wall Street Journal calls "an escalating tax on methane emissions by oil and gas producers that will reach \$1,500 per ton by 2025. The fee is meant to be President Biden's contribution to the recent Glasgow vow to reduce global methane emissions 30 percent by 2030. The tax is estimated to raise \$8 billion over 10 years."

But as The Journal also notes:

"Producers will naturally pass the cost of the tax along to customers."

That customer base is not slim pickings: About 180 million Americans use natural gas to heat homes and run appliances and 5.5 million businesses use it to run their workplaces and manufacturing facilities, the newspaper reminds.

And guess who such a tax hurts the most? The poor.

Of course, once the tax is imposed, you can be assured it will later be increased. Which, of course, eventually will serve to decrease jobs in the natural gas and related industries as the ecocratic squeeze becomes vise-like.

All this anathema to sanity grows even more insane when one considers a companion Senate measure (part of a reconciliation package) that, in the name of offsetting such increased costs, offers oil and gas companies more than three-quarters of a billion dollars to better monitor and reduce methane emissions.

Who thinks up this stuff? One bad policy being paid for by another bad policy? All that wackiness does is offload the cost to every taxpayer.

Much the same can be said of a new Pennsylvania environmental rule, likely to go into effect in the middle of 2022, requiring regular "leak searches" and equipment upgrades.

While the ecocrats complain the new rules don't go far enough, they still pile on the Pennsylvania industry more imposts and more regulatory hoops to jump through.

And, of course, again, more higher consumer costs.

Lest we forget, the coming carbon taxes, the absolute sweetheart of the eco-extremists.

"There is no good time to enact bad policy, and carbon taxes are undoubtedly that," reminded Heartland Institute scholar Sterling Burnett a few years back.

"No carbon tax, state or federal, will prevent any measurable amount of temperature or sea level rise, or reduce the likelihood of hurricanes forming or wildfires from occurring.

"These schemes are virtue signaling, akin to forcing people to wear a hair-shirt to atone for their carbon sins," Burnett wrote then in The Washington Times.

But any way it's cut and any way it's characterized, this overt and covert war on fossil fuels is horrid public policy that will cause far more economic and societal harm with little to no environmental good.

And that's the largest clinker in the largest Christmas stocking imaginable.

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